



DPC Staff Contact: Lauren Griffin PHONE (202) 224-3232 • FAX (202) 228-3432

January 16, 1997

Democratic Goals for a Child Health Initiative

Last year, Congress passed landmark legislation to help workers keep their coverage if they change their job or lose their job. But 40 million Americans still have no health insurance, including 10.5 million children. In every other industrialized country, children have better health coverage than in America. A Democratic priority in the 105th Congress will be to ensure that all children have access to health care by helping working families purchase health insurance for their children.

Democrats believe that every child deserves health insurance coverage to ensure that each child grows up healthy and ready to learn and succeed in life. Every major health reform bill in the 103rd Congress, Republican and Democratic alike, provided assistance to working Americans to purchase health insurance coverage. Most of these bills provided special assistance for the cost of children's coverage.

Democratic Goals

Democrats believe that a successful health initiative should assure every American family the ability to purchase private health insurance for their children by:

- providing working families meaningful financial assistance so that they can afford to purchase health coverage for their children;
- providing coverage for children through age 18, and pregnant women, to ensure that children have a healthy start in life;
- providing working families the ability to purchase children-only health insurance policies;
- covering the full range of services children need; and,
- requiring working families to contribute to the cost of health care for their children, based on their ability to pay.

Democratic Policy Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C., 20510-7050

Tom Daschle, Chairman
Harry Reid, Co-Chairman



Facts

In 1995, 10.5 million children, or one in seven, lacked health insurance coverage.

Who are the Uninsured Children?

- *Children of working parents*—Nine out of ten uninsured children live in families with working parents. (Employee Benefit Research Institute [EBRI])
- *Children in two-parent families*—About two-thirds of uninsured children live in two-parent families. (EBRI)
- *Children of parents whose employers do not offer, or have cut back on dependent insurance coverage*—In 1988, three-quarters of all children had private health insurance coverage mostly through employers, by 1995 it had dropped to two-thirds. (Congressional Research Service [CRS])

Why do Children Need Health Coverage?

- The U.S. has a higher infant mortality rate than all but one industrialized country. (CRS)
- Health insurance provides children access to necessary health care services. According to the General Accounting Office (GAO), children without insurance are:
 - less likely to grow up to be healthy, productive adults;
 - less likely to have a family doctor;
 - less likely to receive timely preventive care; and,
 - less likely to receive treatment even for serious illnesses.

Investing in Health Coverage for Children Makes Sense and Saves Cents

- Uninsured children are more likely to need emergency room care at later stages of their illness, and are more likely to require expensive hospital admission. Emergency room visits cost up to twice as much as office-based care. (Children's Defense Fund [CDF])
- Nine months of prenatal care costs \$1,100; one day of neonatal intensive hospital care for a low birthweight baby costs \$1,000. On average, hospital costs for a low birthweight baby are ten times the cost of prenatal care. (CDF)
- Each dollar invested on basic immunization of preschoolers saves \$7.40 in direct medical cost. (CDF)